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Pollinis and PAN Europe boycott EFSA meeting on neonicotinoids derogations to denounce a flawed assessment

Today, the EFSA is holding a [meeting](#) to expose its methodology on the assessment of 17 derogations provided by 11 Member States for the use of neonicotinoids on sugar beets in 2020 and 2021. Pollinis and PAN Europe will boycott the event as they consider the EFSA has consciously carried out a non-scientific piece of work, far from the 'scientific excellence' it promotes.

On 18 November, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published 17 positive assessments for Member States' derogations to allow the use of neonicotinoid-treated sugar beet seeds. Out of the hundreds of derogations provided by Member States for banned substances, it is only the second time that the European Commission has sent a mandate to the EFSA to assess their validity. For the second time¹, the EFSA has based its work on a flawed protocol that is not suitable for the evaluation of such derogations.

Nicolas Laarman, Managing director at POLLINIS said: "By stating there were no alternatives to neonicotinoids, EFSA validates a deplorable policy: to use one-off technical blockages to maintain the current farming system, regardless of its consequences for the environment and our health. EFSA denies that alternatives to pesticides do exist and are used by all organic farmers: what is missing is the true political will to accompany all farmers with a rational and ambitious transition plans over ten years".

Martin Dermine, Environment and health policy officer at PAN Europe said: "It takes decades for the European Commission ban a toxic substance because of the bad implementation of the EU legislation. Then Member States keep using them by abusing the derogations system".

Nicolas Laarman, added: "The real cost of these derogations will be borne by European citizens, who will have to pay for the dramatic effects of these pesticides in terms of pollution and loss of biodiversity".

Martin Dermine further added: "The European Commission turns a blind eye on the hundreds of derogations that keep exposing citizens to supposedly banned substances: toxic to reproduction, carcinogenic, endocrine disruptors and bee-toxic pesticides keep getting poured into our environment, with the blessing of DG Sante and EFSA. In the light of the EU Green Deal, this is inadmissible".

For more detailed information on why the EFSA methodology is considered problematic, despite the requests for improvement, please read PAN Europe's factsheet².

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Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe is a network of NGOs working to reduce the use of hazardous pesticides and have them replaced with ecologically sound alternatives. We work to eliminate dependency on chemical pesticides and to support safe sustainable pest control methods. Our network brings together 40 consumer, public health, and environmental organisations, and women's groups from across Europe.



¹ <https://www.pan-europe.info/press-releases/2018/06/efsa-shows-its-scientific-limits-providing-low-quality-assessment-national>

² <https://www.pan-europe.info/sites/pan-europe.info/files/field/Factsheet%20EFSA%202020-21%20derogations%20assessment%20.pdf>